


Amend claim 10 as follows:

 --10. (thrice amended) The method according to claim 1 wherein for the game rules a bet on one of the player betting zones or on one of the dealer betting zones is a winning bet when the player hand or the dealer hand has a cumulative card values closest to 21 or has a Blackjack; and a bet on one of said further betting zones associated with the player betting zones or the dealer zones is a winning bet when the player hand or the dealer hand has said prenominated winning combination of cards.--

REMARKS

A new Figure 2 is presented by this response, per the requirement at Item 1 of the Official Action of November 29, 2001. The description of the drawings at page 3 of the specification is correspondingly expanded. Neither the introduction of the attached new Figure 2 nor the revision to page 3 of the specification introduces new matter into the application, as the sequence of play set forth in the flowchart of new Figure 2 is plainly described by way of example at pages 3-5 of the specification.

The only other issue raised by the Official Action was the repeated rejection of claims 1-14 as allegedly being anticipated by SCHORR et al. 5,257,810. That rejection is respectfully traversed, for the following reasons.

The rejection is dependent on construing the "one or more further betting zones" of present claim 1 sufficiently broadly to read on the "tie" betting zone of the SCHORR playing surface. However, the claims cannot reasonably be construed so broadly, especially as amended herewith.

In particular, claim 1 does not merely recite "further betting zones" without additional qualifications; instead, claim 1 recites specifically that each further betting zone is designated for a predominated winning combination of cards.

With reference to the embodiments of the present specification, wherein the invention is embodied by way of example as an improved Blackjack game, the predominated winning combination of cards is preferably "Blackjack". Thus, in the embodiments of the specification, the predominated combination of cards may be wagered upon prior to cards being dealt, in anticipation of a specific winning combination of cards - in the case of Blackjack, of course, that would be a 10-value card in combination with an Ace.

By contrast, when a player playing the game described in SCHORR et al. bets on a "tie", he is by definition not betting on a predominated winning combination of cards. A tie occurs whenever the value of the player's hand equals that of the dealer, regardless of what that value might be from one hand to the next. Therefore, SCHORR et al. cannot be said to teach any game in which provision is made for a further betting zone, to

permit the one or more betting players to bet that a preominated winning combination of cards will be dealt (either to the player hand, the dealer hand, or both).

We further note that present claim 4 is specific to the game of Blackjack, and further specifies that the preominated winning combination of cards is "Blackjack". As SCHORR et al. admittedly makes no provision for a player to bet in advance specifically on the occurrence of a Blackjack, it is unclear how claim 4 could have been regarded as being anticipated by SCHORR et al.

Despite the only prior art rejection of record being an anticipation rejection based on SCHORR et al., the Official Action nevertheless contends "in an alternative" that further betting is old and well known and inherent in SCHORR et al. The Official Action then points to certain betting zones of two other cited references, namely, CHAE 5,957,459 and EATON et al. 6,079,712.

In response, applicant notes that, if it is necessary to rely upon additional references for teaching features not described in SCHORR et al. '810, then the anticipation rejection is improper. No basis is provided for the contention that the feature at issue in present claim 1, as to which SCHORR is silent, is "inherent" in SCHORR et al., neither do the further cited references evidence any such alleged inherency. Indeed, CHAE relates to modified games of Baccarat and Chemin de Fer,

whereas EATON et al. contemplates betting after the initial cards have been dealt, but before the final cards have been dealt. It is unclear how or why the skilled artisan would have contemplated modifying the SCHORR et al. Blackjack-based game in view of the quite different games described by CHAE and EATON et al., and the Official Action offers no rationale in support thereof.

Lastly, the Official Action contends that the tie zones provided in the embodiments of the invention, and recited in present claim 2, are the same as the "further betting zones" of present claim 1. However, that interpretation is inconsistent with the description in the present specification and drawings, and inconsistent with the language of the present claims themselves. In particular, present Figure 1 clearly shows the tie zones 26 as being distinct from, and in addition to, the zones 18 and 22 for betting on a prenominated winning combination of cards. Furthermore, as discussed above, a "tie" betting zone does not designate a prenominated winning combination of cards, because the combination involved in a tie is variable, depending merely on whether the player hand matches the dealer hand for a given round.

In light of the above discussion, therefore, it is believed to be apparent that none of claims 1-14 as they appear in the case can properly be regarded as anticipated by SCHORR et al. '810.

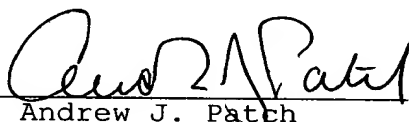
In view of the present amendment and the foregoing remarks, therefore, it is believed that this application is now in condition for allowance, with claims 1-14, as amended. Allowance and passage to issue on that basis are accordingly respectfully requested.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version showing the changes made to the specification and claims. The attached page is captioned "VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE."

Respectfully submitted,

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"VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE"

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Page 3, the paragraph, beginning on line 18, has been amended as follows:

--Figure 1 shows a layout of a surface for a dealer "Blackjack" game as an embodiment of the invention; and

Figure 2 is a flowchart showing one possible sequence of play as described herein.--;

the paragraph, beginning on line 25, has been amended as follows:

The surface 10 includes seven sectors 16 of betting areas. Each sector 16 has player "Blackjack" betting zone 18, a player betting zone 20, a dealer "Blackjack" [playing] betting zone 22, a dealer betting zone 24 and a tie betting zone 26.--;

the paragraph, beginning on line 28, has been amended as follows:

--The surface 10 also has a [playing] player card area 28 and a dealer card area 30 as shown in Figure 1.--.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claim 1 has been amended as follows:

--1. (twice amended) A method of playing a card game for a dealer and one imaginary or real player receiving cards from the dealer on a playing surface, the playing surface having at least two sides, one or more designated player betting zones

along one side of the surface, where participants can bet on the player winning, one or more designated dealer betting zones along an opposite side of the surface where the participants can bet on the dealer winning, and one or more further betting zones associated with respective player and dealer betting zones, the or each said further betting zones being designated for a prenominated [or paramount winning hand] winning combination of cards for participants to place bets thereon, and in use one or each participant places a bet on one or more of the betting zones and a dealer deals from one or more packs of for the player and the dealer in a manner according to card game rules, on completion of a hand participants are paid according to winning bets made and according to the game rules.--

Claim 3 has been amended as follows:

--3. (thrice amended) The method according to claim 1 wherein said further betting zones [including] include one or more prenominated [or paramount winning zones] winning combinations of cards for the dealer and one or more prenominated [or paramount winning zones] winning combinations of cards for the player.--

Claim 4 has been amended as follows:

--4. (thrice amended) The method according to claim 1 wherein the prenominated winning [hand] combination of cards is "Blackjack" in the game of that name.--

Claim 5 has been amended as follows:

--5. (thrice amended) The method according to claim 1 wherein the playing surface is divided into sectors and each sector has one player betting zone, one dealer betting zone and a prenominated [or paramount] winning [hand] combination of cards betting zone associated with each said player betting zone and dealer betting zone.--

Claim 7 has been amended as follows:

--7. (thrice amended) The method according to claim 5 wherein a predetermined odd is allocated to each said tie zone and/or each said prenominated [or paramount] winning [hand] combination of cards betting zones.--

Claim 10 has been amended as follows:

--10. (thrice amended) The method according to claim 1 wherein for the game rules a bet on one of the player betting zones or on one of the dealer betting zones is a winning bet when the player hand or the dealer hand has a cumulative card values closest to 21 or has a Blackjack; and a bet on one of said further betting zones associated with the player betting zones or the dealer zones is a winning bet when the player hand or the dealer hand has said prenominated [or paramount] winning [hand] combination of cards.--